DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 141 347 SP 011 238

AUTHOR Stoker, W.M., Ed.; Splawn, Robert E., Ed.
TITLE Studies in Education.
INSTITUTION West Texas State Univ., Canyon.
PUB DATE May 76
NOTE 31p.
JOURNAL CIT Studies in Education; v15 May 76

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Responsibility; Culture Conflict; Elementary Schools; *Mexican Americans; *Parent Attitudes; *Parent Education; Parent School Relationship; Parochial Schools; *Principals; *Private Schools; Spanish Speaking

ABSTRACT

This journal contains articles on the following subjects: parental attitudes toward the elementary school principalship; parents as educators: a comparative study of two Adlerian parent education programs; a tribute to A.S. Neill, founder of Summerhill School in Leiston, Suffolk, England; the certain demise of private education; and achievement motivation and academic achievement in Mexican-American boys. (JD)

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STUDIES IN EDUCATION

An Annual Publication of
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
West Texas State University
Canyon, Texas
Gail Shannon, Dean

W. M. (Fred) Stoker and Robert E. Splawn, Editors

Published by
West Texas State University
Canyon, Texas
May 1976

SP011238

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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THE EDITORS' PAGE

Studies in Education is published annually by the College of Education, West Texas State University, Canyon, Texas. Copies of the publication may be obtained by writing the editors. There is no charge for the publication to college and university libraries or to individuals interested in doing research.

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A STUDY OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP

By W. M. (Fred) Stoker
West Texas State University

During the summer of 1976 nineteen graduate students in an elementary administration course interviewed three hundred eighty parents concerning their attitudes toward the elementary school principalship. Although the selection of parents was neither random nor stratified, the group did represent a wide variety of socio-economic levels, various sized communities, and age groups. All of these parents were from the Texas Panhandle.

An interview form was prepared to give uniformity to the study; however, an open ended question was included at the end. This report generalizes on the results of these interviews.

A survey of literature revealed practically no information concerning parental attitudes toward the elementary school principal. Since almost all parents recognize the extreme importance of their children's elementary school education and the significance of the principal to this education, it is strange that there is seemingly no research in this area.

This report will list generalizations under each question and summarize the entire findings.

1. How do elementary school principals spend their time?

   Performing office duties and maintaining discipline seemed to be the most common beliefs. Conducting meetings with teachers and parents and patrolling halls and playgrounds ran a close second as to how parents thought principals spent their school time.

   Very few parents perceived the principal's important role as a supervisor of instruction. This may be a significant omission.

2. What kinds of principals' activities have been most helpful to you?

   Just being available and making parents welcome was the most common reaction to this question. Counseling with students and parents and keeping teachers on the ball were often mentioned.

A few parents couldn't think of anything the principal had done to help them. There were, in most groups, some parents who knew very little about their children's principal's activities.

3. How was the principal selected?

   Most parents admitted that they did not know how the selection was made. Others said the choice was made by the board or the superintendent.

   Apparently, none of the people in the larger cities realized that a screening committee recommended applicants to the superintendent who in turn made a recommendation to the board.

   Some snide remarks suggested the principal was usually selected from the ranks of unsuccessful coaches.

4. What was his background?

   Here again, practically all parents did not know. Some replied that he was "probably a teacher".

5. How do you think principals should be selected?

   Generally, parents thought the superintendent should select the principal and the board should do the hiring. Actually, this is the procedure followed in most schools.

6. Should teachers and/or parents be involved in this selection?

   A big majority said no. Parents seemed to think they were represented by their elected board members. A significant minority said teachers could have an input through some type of representative committee.

   Another small group of parents felt parents could be involved in this selection by a "pulpit" committee type of organization.

7. How should the ideal principal spend his time?

   Maintaining good discipline, getting to know children, being available at all times, and seeing that teachers work headed this list.

   Very few mentioned that the principal should spend much of his time in instructional leadership.

8. What could he do to be of most help to teachers?

   Parents thought he should be available according to the "fireman and policeman" concept.

Others believed he should back teachers, probably thinking of disciplinary situations. Still others thought he could be most helpful by leaving teachers alone.

Several helpful attributes desired were: be able to communicate with parents, be genuinely interested in children, be a good listener, and be open-minded.

9. What principal's activities actually impair teaching effectiveness?

This question, as it was worded, actually sought some negative attitudes toward the principal. Some damaging practices were:

1. Overusing the public address system.
2. Requiring too much paperwork of teachers.
3. Being too autocratic
4. Not allowing innovations.

10. Should the principal's position be restricted to men? women?

About 70% of the parents said, "It doesn't make any difference; choose the best person for the job". Approximately 30% said a man was best for the position.

Only one person of the 380 interviewed said a woman would do a better job because mothers would relate better to a woman.

One mother said the principal should be a man because the *Bible* said so.

11. Should teachers/parents be involved in administrative decisions of the school?

Generally speaking, parents believed teachers and parents should not be involved. There was some misunderstandings as to what was meant by "administration". Apparently, most parents believed the principal should administer and the teachers should teach.

A small minority, however, believed teachers and parents could profitably be provided opportunities to make administrative suggestions.

12. Describe the ideal principal.

He should be a personable, friendly, and warm person who gets along well with parents and students. The optimum age for this ideal person would be about forty years.

Surprisingly, intelligence was not mentioned by most parents.

13. Elaborate on anything else about the Elementary School Principalship.

    Several parents believed principals could do a much better job in communicating with them about the school. One specific suggestion was for principals to send out a monthly newsletter.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Generally speaking, parents had a high opinion of the elementary school principalship and recognized the worth of the position.

There were several findings which were somewhat disturbing to the researchers. The first was a general feeling that most parents know little about the elementary school principal, his background, and his duties. It would seem that a position this important to parents of elementary age children should be better known.

Also, the parents concept of the principal's duties indicates, at least to the researcher, a less than professional view of the position. It seemed that a large majority of parents interviewed did not perceive of the principal as primarily a director of instruction. Instead, they thought he was a manager of routines, disciplinarian, and public relations officer.

Based on this study, the writer makes the following suggestions to elementary school principals:

1. Review your activities to see if your role is really professional.
2. Do a better job of informing parents as to your responsibilities.
3. Prepare a monthly newsletter to be sent to all homes.
4. Write more articles for your local newspaper.

PARENTS AS EDUCATORS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO ADLERIAN PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

by
William O. Umstead, West Texas State University
and
Carol S. Cossum, doctoral student, University of Houston

In recent years there has been an increased emphasis on educational programs designed to assist parents in their child rearing practices (Hereford, 1963; Dreikurs and Soltz, 1964; Soltz, 1967; Gordon, 1970; Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1973 and 1976). These programs have been utilized as both preventive and remedial efforts to assist parents and have involved elementary school counselors and school psychologists as leaders in the training process.

One of the most widespread approaches to parent education has been the Adlerian Model espoused by Dreikurs and Soltz, 1964 and Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1973 and 1976. This model is based upon the theories and experiences of Alfred Adler (Ansbacher and Ansbacker, 1956) and the primary goal of this model is to train parents to relate to their children using the democratic philosophy of mutual respect and cooperation. Through participation in the Adlerian discussion group, parents learn to understand the goals of their children's behavior and learn to respond in more effective ways. These models differ primarily from Hereford's (1963) model in their use of a set curriculum.

Although the Adlerian approach has enjoyed longstanding use and popularity in this country, there has been a paucity of research concerning its effectiveness. Freeman (1975) reports some favorable data of the client satisfaction type gathered on groups conducted in Corvallis, Oregon, over a four-year period. Of the 345 participants, 93.6 percent rated the experience as being very helpful or helpful, with six percent responding that it was of some help and 0.4 percent finding it of no help.

Wilborne (1976) reports positive findings from a well designed study which compared the efficacy of using elementary school counselors or trained parents as leaders of Adlerian study groups. After a six-week training period for the parent leaders, two parent study groups which lasted ten weeks were conducted in each of eight schools; one study group was counselor-led, and one study group was parent-led. A consultant was available to meet with the parent leaders once a week during the length of the study group. There were also

two control groups in each school, one comprised of volunteer parents who attended fewer than one-half the sessions and the other composed of randomly selected parents who had children enrolled in the school. All parents (N-359) were given a pre- and post-test on the Hereford *Parent Attitude Survey* which yields a score on the five scales of Confidence, Causation, Acceptance, Understanding and Trust. A significant difference at the .01 level was found between the two treatment and the non-treatment groups on all five scales. No significant differences were found between the counselor- and parent-led groups on four of the five scales. A significant difference at the .05 level was found on the Causation scale favoring the counselor-led group.

The purpose of this study was to generate data regarding the effectiveness of two Adlerian Models of parent education when led by trained parents. The Parent Study Group (PSG) program by Dreikurs and Soltz, 1964 and Soltz, 1967 and the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) program recently developed by Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1976 were utilized as the two parent education models.

Parent Education Models

Both models are based on the principles of Adlerian psychology and are designed to help parents establish democratic relationships with their children. The major concepts presented are:

Life-style is the principle by which the individual personality functions. It is the belief system he has about himself and the world. The individual perceives, learns, and retains what fits his life style.

The family-atmosphere is the dynamic interaction between parents, parents and children, and siblings. It is the model for human relationships. It may be competitive or cooperative, friendly or hostile, autocratic or permissive, orderly or chaotic.

The family-constellation is the child's psychological position in the family—the situation into which he is born and the way in which he interprets it. This often relates to the child's position among siblings, i.e., first born, middle, youngest.

Behavior is purposeful. Behavior and misbehavior can both be understood as directed toward the primary goal of belonging. A child can learn to belong by contributing, being responsible, and cooperating. However, he can also misconceive that he belongs by seeking attention, power, revenge, and displaying inadequacy—the mistaken goals of misbehavior.

Encouragement is the process of focusing on the assets and strengths of children to build self-confidence and self-esteem. It differs from praise which is a type of reward based on competition and given for "winning" and being "best". Encouragement is given for effort or improvement and is not based on competition. Praise attempts to motivate externally; encouragement attempts to motivate internally.

Natural and logical consequences is a method of discipline that develops responsibility in children. It differs from the reward-and-punishment method which is coercive and makes the parent responsible for the child's behavior. The purpose of allowing natural consequences to occur and of designing logical consequences is to let the child experience reality, make decisions, and be accountable.

The Dinkmeyer-McKay model includes all of the major concepts defined above but adds two units on communications based on Gordon's *Parent Effectiveness Training* (1970). Specifically, the skills of identifying problem ownership, active listening for feelings and meaning, confronting with "I-messages", and problem-solving are taught.

Method

Participants in this study were 23 mothers whose children attended a court-ordered desegregated school located in a white middle- to upper-middle class neighborhood. All participants were registered for a parent education program after receiving an informational letter sent home through the elementary school. Experimental group 1 (E_1) were parents who volunteered during the fall semester of 1975-76. Experimental group two (E_2) were parents who volunteered during the spring semester of 1975-76. The control group (C) were those parents who registered for the parent group during the fall semester of 1975-76 but were unable to attend the parent program.

Table 1

Composition of the Groups

Group	Black	White	Total
E_1	1	7	8
E_2	2	5	7
C	3	5	8

The data obtained on a pre- post-test basis were used to test three hypotheses regarding the improvement of parent attitudes toward child rearing as measured by the Parent Attitude Survey (Hereford, 1963). The Parent Attitude Survey measures five dimensions of parental attitude. (1) *Confidence* is the feeling of adequacy or inadequacy in the parental role. (2) *Causation* is the extent to which the parent sees herself or himself as a major factor in determining the child's behavior. (3) *Acceptance* is the extent to which the parent is satisfied with the child and is willing to see him or her as an individual. (4) *Mutual Understanding* is the parent's perception about the degree of reciprocity of feelings between the parent and the child. (5) *Mutual Trust* is the amount of confidence that a parent feels he or she and the child have in each other. The sum of these dimensions yields a total attitude score.

The hypotheses tested were:

1. There will be a significant difference between experimental group one (E_1) and the control group (C) on each of the five Hereford Parent Attitude Survey (PAS) scales of Confidence, Causation, Acceptance, Understanding, and Trust.

2. There will be a significant difference between experimental group two (E_2) and the control group (C) on each of the five PAS scales.

3. There will be a significant difference between experimental group one (E_1) and experimental group two (E_2) on each of the five PAS scales.

The non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test was used to analyze the data. This test has power comparable to that of the t-test while lacking the restrictive assumptions and requirements of the t-test. By convention, the .05 level of significance was adopted for all statistical analyses and was used as the criteria of acceptance or rejection for each of the hypotheses.

Participants in experimental group one (E_1) attended eight weekly group meetings of two hours each for a total of 16 contact hours. They used the Dreikurs-Soltz text *Children the Challenge* (1964) and experienced the PSG model in the following sequence:

Session I : Family Atmosphere and Family Constellation

Session II : Encouragement vs. Praise

Session III : Goals of Behavior and Misbehavior

Session IV : Natural and Logical Consequences

Session V : Order in the Home: Action Not Words

Session VI : Developing Courage

Session VII : Making Home Life Pleasant

Session VIII: The Family Council

The PSG sessions were co-led by two trained but non-professional parent leaders, one black and one white. The format consisted of a guided discussion around the assigned weekly readings. A leader would ask discussion-promoting questions based on the text and participants would respond. Parents would then share their own experiences, failures and successes, which they had had in the particular topic areas.

Participants in experimental group two (E_2) attended six weekly group meetings of three hours each for a total of 18 contact hours. They used the Dinkmeyer-McKay *Parent's Handbook* (1976) and experienced the STEP model in the following sequence:

Session I : Understanding Children's Behavior and Misbehavior

Session II : Encouragement: Building Confidence and Self-Esteem

Session III : Communication: Listening to Your Child

Session IV : Communication: Exploring Alternative and Expressing Your Feelings and Ideas

Session V : Applying Natural and Logical Consequences

Session VI : Democratic and Positive Parenting: The Family Meeting

These sessions were also co-led by two trained but non-professional parent leaders, one black and one white. The format was similar to that of the E_1 group, consisting of a guided discussion followed by a sharing of experiences. In addition to the assigned readings, tapes were used to illustrate the concepts being discussed. The STEP model differs from the PSG model primarily in its emphasis on communication skills and in the use of exercises and role-play to develop competencies in these skill areas.

Results

The Mann-Whitney U Test was employed to analyze the gain scores of E_1, E_2, and C. The data lend partial support to the three hypotheses.

Hypothesis No. 1 predicted a significant difference between E_1 and C on the five PAS scales. A significant difference was found

between E_1 and C on the PAS scales of Confidence and Trust but not on the scales of Causation, Acceptance, and Understanding.

Hypothesis No. 2 predicted a significant difference between E_2 and C on the five PAS scales. A significant difference was found between E_2 and C on the PAS scales of Confidence, Acceptance, Understanding, and Trust but not on the scale of Causation.

Hypothesis No. 3 predicted a significant difference between E_1 and E_2 on the five PAS scales. Only one significant difference was found between E_1 and E_2. The gain scores of the E_2 group were found to be significantly higher than those of the E_1 group on the Acceptance scale. There were no significant differences between E_1 and E_2 on the PAS scales of Confidence, Causation, Understanding, and Trust.

Table 2

Mean Gains on PAS Scales

Group	Confidence	Causation	Acceptance	Understanding	Trust
E_1	2.64*	0.64	-1.00	0.63	1.50*
E_2	1.72*	0.00	3.29*†	3.14*	1.71*
C	-2.38	-2.64	-2.13	-2.75	-2.88

*Significant (.05) E_1, E_2 and C
†Significant (.05) E_1 and E_2

Discussion

While the results of this study are indicative of program effectiveness for both models, they can not be generalized due to the following limitations inherent in the research design:

1. The experimental groups were not randomly selected.
2. The control group was not randomly selected.
3. There was no control for the group experience.
4. All groups were small in number.
5. The groups were not matched for such variables as education level, socio-economic class, number and age of children.
6. The post-test data were not in every case collected twelve weeks after the administration of the pre-test.

Findings lend support to the assumption that participation in an Adlerian parent education group would improve parental attitudes as measured by the PAS. The Dreikurs-Soltz PSG (E_1) showed significant gains on the Confidence and Trust scales and the Dinkmeyer-McKay STEP (E_2) showed significant gains on the Confidence, Acceptance, Understanding, and Trust scales.

Some support was found also for the hypothesis predicting that participation in the Dinkmeyer-McKay STEP group (E_2) would result in greater improvement in parent attidues on the PAS than would participation in the Dreikurs-Soltz PSG group (E_1). The E_2 group did show significantly greater gains than the E_1 group on the Acceptance scale which may indicate that the STEP focus on receiving and sending skills does increase parental acceptance of the child. It was also expected that the understanding between parent and child would be improved through better communications skills. Although the trend was in the anticipated direction (see Table 2), this difference did not reach statistical significance.

Hereford's (1963) study on the effectiveness of unstructured discussion groups and Wilborne's (1976) study on the effectiveness of structured Adlerian discussion groups both found significant gains on all five scales. There is strong support then for the contention that confidence in the parental role can be significantly increased through participation in a preventive parent education group. Disparity in other PAS findings can in part be accounted for by such variables as differences in methodology, concepts emphasized, length of the educational experience, and trainer competence.

Implications from this study and others provide continued support for the value of parent education programs designed to promote positive interpersonal relationships between parents and children. Wilborne's study (1976) and this study also lend support for the effectiveness of parents as leaders of other parents in these programs. This implication has significant ramifications for the role of the counselor in the elementary schools. This could mean that elementary school counselors could learn to train parent leaders and in affect become consultants to parents in their role of child rearing. The role of elementary counselors as consultants to classroom teachers has been documented by previous studies (Marchant, 1972, Umstead, 1974). This would shift the major emphasis of the elementary counselor away from counseling and into the consultant role working with the significant adults in the child's life rather than directly with the child.

Several questions still remain. Do schools want to assume this additional responsibility in working directly with parents? Are

elementary school counselors adequately trained to perform these functions?

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SUMMERHILL WITHOUT NEILL

By W. M. Fred Stoker
West Texas State University

A. S. Neill, founder of the world famous free school, Summerhill, died in 1973 just before his ninetieth birthday. Followers of Summerhill have often wondered if this unique school could survive the passing of its creative and charismatic leader. (Innovative schools are usually on tenuous grounds anyway.) A visit to Leiston, Suffolk, England in the summer of 1976 verifies that Summerhill is alive and well under the leadership of Ena Neill, A. S. Neill's widow.

Mrs. Neill welcomed the American visitor and his wife to her cluttered office by removing her two dogs from chairs and ordering tea. Her beloved cat purred contentedly in the window during the interview.

One of the first questions asked was how had Summerhill prospered since Neill's death. Ena, as she is known by all Summerhillians, seemed a little incensed by the question and quickly replied that the school has been conducted exactly as it was before Neill died. She stated that Neill's original ideas were sound, and his presence was not necessary to the operation of the school. She did admit to some difficulty in financial operations but attributed it to inflation and some delinquent tuition bills. The school receives far more applicants than it can accept, and enrollment must be limited to the present sixty-five boarding and twelve day students if the purposes of the institution are maintained.

The school's children come from all over the world. A few years ago the majority of the Summerhillians were from America but Mrs. Neill believes America now has sufficient free schools to meet its own needs. Only two or three from the USA attend at present.

Children are admitted between the ages of six to eleven and ordinarily stay until the age sixteen. There is, of course, no graduation from Summerhill; the child leaves when he is ready.

The "Saturday night session" is still the rule-making apparatus for the school. It was initiated by Neill to permit the children to govern and discipline themselves. There is also a Friday tribunal to discuss petty disagreements and transgressions.

Although Summerhill is noted for its freedom, this does not mean license, avers Ena. As a result students have regulated bed times and

follow a long list of "Thou Shalt Nots". Most doors were locked, and children are carefully supervised.

There are ten teachers who all meet British certification standards. Mrs. Neill firmly states the teachers do not have the freedom given to students. For example, teachers must hold their scheduled classes regularly, and they must take turns supervising children at other times. In addition, children are free to criticize teachers by name, and any teacher who does not appeal to the children can expect short tenure. Teachers do not receive formal contracts; they are, instead, informally hired on six-weeks agreements. Teachers receive low annual salaries of about $1,800 plus room and board, and Mrs. Neill wishes she could afford to pay them more. Since the school is so famous she has no shortage of applications for teachers. Very few teachers, Mrs. Neill believes, can adjust to the community life and also be successful with these children. These factors result in a big turnover in staff.

Mrs.Neill believes the absence of tensions to be Summerhill's greatest asset. A walk around the campus verifies this philosophy. The buildings are generally run down and decorated at random with graffiti in a childish hand. The grass is tall and the gardens ragged. Children lounge in weathered chairs and couches while ducks and chickens, cats and dogs, wander by. Behind the appearance of complete freedom stands a basic structure: rules, scheduled classes, locked doors, mutual love and respect. Summerhill pupils benefit from the seven to one teacher ratio, but they benefit even more from the unique atmosphere established by A. S. Neill.

THE CERTAIN DEMISE OF PRIVATE EDUCATION

by
Elmer Ireton, Hardin-Simmons University
Sherry L. Taylor, Hardin-Simmons University

Education in the private sector has been important in the educational history of the United States. The right of people to choose an education outside the public sphere has long been established. The fact that the right exists to establish private schools does not guarantee that they will forever be a part of the overall configuration of educational institutions.

The hypothesis of this paper is that private education has inherently within it the rudiments of its own destruction. Explication of these assumptions is given under the following categories.

Separation of Church and State

The political assumption that in a democracy there should be a clear delineation between government and any established religion is generally accepted by U. S. citizens. This assumption hampers to a great extent what education in the private sector can do. As a result of Everson v. Board of Education, the courts have said:

> The "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment means at least this:...Neither (the state nor the Federal Government) can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion to another....No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations of groups and vise versa.[1]

Private schools must operate outside the accepted domain of government aid, but must be regulated by government constraints especially as they relate to the equal protection of citizens' rights.

Finance

An area which can be enhancing or debilitating to an institution is that of finance. Those persons or agencies who control the purse strings quite frequently gain control over other specifics in a situation. Because private education relies heavily upon support from individual contributions and foundations, the danger clearly is that

institutional priorities will be shifted to and fro by the group or individuals having the most to offer. (The institution, in an attempt to entice as many contributions as possible, will compromise what the institution is striving for to such a low level or in so many directions that there will be no clear direction or stance for the institution.) No institution can be all things to all people. As of this date, private institutions cannot accept general governmental aid. This certainly limits the possible revenue from open and impartial sources.

Many sects prohibit accepting funds from government sources which greatly limits funding prospects. To some extent, this has been circumvented by the philosophy of the funds which go to the individual are not institutional aid. Even this, however, greatly cuts the total funding available to institutions in the private sector. As competition for students increases, and the gap between private and public tuition continues to lengthen, more and more private colleges and universities will be forced to close their doors.[2] According to Frank Newman, "While students should pay more at private colleges and universities, these institutions cannot be a realistic alternative if the tuition gap continues to widen."[3]

Authoritarianism

In order for an institution to become or retain its uniqueness and be truly distinct, it must have a very authoritarian administration. Otherwise the institution would lose support from many of its constituents.

Authoritarianism stifles creativity. Authoritarianism is contrary to the principle of liberty and academic freedom. In an authoritarian environment people are not free to inquire or create as they would be in a less rigid environment. Authoritarianism forces the institution to adopt a very closed environment. Authoritarianism forces the institution to adopt a very closed environment. Authoritarianism causes people to conform to its biases and idiosyncrasies rather than accept data from a field of roses which could prove to be apropos. Authoritarianism creates a lot of pseudoactivity, the end result of which is of no avail.

Rigidity

Because private institutions must be different in order to remain distinctive, they are likely to adopt rigid policies. Even if rigid policies are not intentionally adopted, as society changes there is less change in the private institution thus leaving it behind in the number and types of adjustments which need to be made. In institutions of higher learning, a demand for high academic excellence is a cover for a regressive academic policy.

Divisiveness of sects

It was thought by John Dewey that any group which advocated withdrawal in any sphere of life from the mainstream of society was diverse. This is true even if no overtly divisive policy is advocated. Divisiveness of this type could almost be so by default. Institutions which do not purposefully work for more openness, cooperativeness and well being for everyone inadvertedly move toward divisiveness. Institutions vying against each other for recognition and power cannot help but to be a negative force when unity is a goal.

In an overall sense, education in the private sector may be antidemocratic in that it promotes sects rather than cohesiveness in society.

Failure to adjust to needs

The closed system exemplified by private institutions cannot openly or readily accept data from the environment. Changes cannot be made without the loss of identity by the institution. Free and open intercourse with the environment at large cannot be enjoyed by institutions in the private sector. Feedback from various sources is not as highly pursued by the private sector because of fear that inroads are being made upon the institution's integrity.

The Product

The types of persons produced from this environment may not be those who are best suited for living in a democracy or for perpetuating a democracy in future generations.

From the field of psychology, it has been understood from many sources that persons living in an authoritarian or restricted environment develop weak egos. Those with weak egos are less likely to be able to cope favorably with life's situations. Fear and indecision will characterize persons with weak egos. Persons having weak egos are less likely to enhance healthy self-concepts in others. This means that the problem is perpetuated in a never ending cycle.

The education received from overly rigid institutions may be far from liberal. The study of liberal arts is calculated to make men free. Far from being free or liberated, the products of stifled environments may be prisoners of their own narrowness.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Everson v. Board of Education, 330 U.S.1 (1947)

[2]Frank Newman, "Federal Aid for Private Universities," Ernest L. Boyer, in *College Management*, May 1973, page 32-34.

[3]Ibid.

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN MEXICAN-AMERICAN BOYS

by
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INTRODUCTION

One general approach to the measurement of human motivation has been to try to detect its presence from a person's behavior, from something he does. David McClelland and his associates (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953) have maintained, however, that the measurement of motivation must be related to something of importance, for if it is not, then the time spent in developing such a measurement is scientifically unprofitable.

An area in which numerous attempts have been made to relate motivation and behavior is that of academic achievement. For several decades, education and psychology have been concerned with attaining a greater understanding and more reliable prediction of individual differences in the academic achievement of children. Until recently, though, research in this area was primarily concerned with the measurement of intellectual abilities by intelligence tests and the use of these tests to predict academic achievement. While differences in achievement motivation, as well as ability, were assumed to play a significant role in children's achievement efforts, achievement motivation was not directly studied as a possible determinant. Motivational factors associated with academic success did not yield as readily to quantitative treatment as did the intellectual factors. (In this paper, "*n* achievement" [need to achieve] means the same thing as "achievement motivation.")

The work of McClelland and his associates (1953) with imaginative fantasy provided a major avenue of attack on the problem, and as a result of this work, the problem of academic achievement and its relation to motivational factors has been widely examined.

The numerous studies conducted on this relationship between achievement motivation and grades, however, show very variable and contradictory results (Travers, 1972). Most of these studies have been concerned with high school or college populations, and a large percentage have found, at best, only a moderate correlation.

A number of suggestions have been offered to account for this confusion in results. The studies in this area have been highly varied

in approach and this would not lend to consistency in findings. A wide variety of measuring instruments has been used. There have been charges of weakness in experimental design. Some studies have been criticized for using clinical measurements in nonclinical situations.

Another frequently mentioned source of difficulty has to do with the nature of the populations. Most of the studies have dealt with the general Anglo-American group, a population so heterogeneous that generalization can be made only as tentative hypotheses for further investigation. Roth (1956) observed that almost all studies of academic success and failure have had at least two things in common. First, they examined success and failure in terms of the personal characteristics of the individual students and did not attempt to relate these characteristics to the academic milieu of the students. Second, they grouped all achieving students together and described them as homogeneous, and did the same with all nonachieving students, thus overlooking the possibility of there being more than one important road to success or to failure.

Gill and Spilka (1962) noted that by investigating the possible factors involved in academic success or failure among minority ethnic groups, many of the apparently confounding variables might be more easily observed and controlled. Cultural determinants can possibly be defined with more accuracy, and the socio-economic distribution is often more restricted.

Procedure

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between achievement motivation and classroom performance of fifty Mexican-American elementary school boys. It was hypothesized that achieving boys would show significantly greater achievement motivation than nonachievers. The original population consisted of 83 boys in four fifth and three sixth grade classes of the DeZavala Elementary School in Houston, Texas. This school was located in the Magnolia Park area of Houston and met many of the needs for homogeneity mentioned above.

The age range for the population was from 10.6 to 13.9 years, with a mean age of 12.4. The IQ range was from 68 to 123, and the mean IQ was 93. Intelligence was determined by the Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test.

Two samples were involved: 25 achievers and 25 nonachievers. For the purpose of determining these two samples the population was approximated into quartiles with respect to both grade-point average and intelligence. The grade-point average was calculated from the report card grades issued at the end of the third six weeks of school. To

determine the grade-point average a grade of A was given the value of 4, a grade of B given the value of 3, C the value of 2, D the value of 1, and F the value of 0. Table I shows a 4 x 4 cell design with grade-point average along one dimension and intelligence along the other. The four cells along each dimension represent the four respective quartiles. For the purpose of this study a non-achiever was defined as that pupil whose grade-point average quartile was below that of his intelligence quartile. An achiever was defined as that student whose grade-point average quartile was equal to or above his intelligence quartile. On the basis of this procedure, 25 boys had a grade-point average quartile which was lower than that of their intelligence quartile and thus by definition were non-achievers. In Table I the nonachievers are seen as those students falling below the heavy line. The nonachieving sample was matched according to age and intelligence with 25 achievers (any student above the heavy line in Table I).

Table I

An Approximation of Intelligence-Test Scores and Grade-Point Averages into Quartiles for the Purpose of Defining Nonachievers

Grade Point Average	IQ 123-100	IQ 99-93	IQ 92-85	IQ 84-	
4.00-2.50	10	3	6	2	21
2.49-2.00	6	7	6	2	21
1.99-1.30	5	7	5	4	21
1.29-	1	3	3	13	20
	22	19	20	22	83

To obtain a measurement of achievement motivation, a short version of a Thematic Apperception Test developed by McClelland and his associates was employed (McClelland et al., 1953). This is the most frequently used projective technique in achievement motivation research. The scoring system of the test is designed to detect and measure the degree to which a person thinks about and is emotionally involved in competitive task behavior which is evaluated against a standard of excellence. The customary procedure is to present to the subject a set of untitled pictures showing people in simple situations and instruct him to tell or write a story about each picture. The subject's imaginative responses are then scored for evidence of achievement motivation. It is the assumption of this test that the more an individual shows indication of connections between evaluated performance and affect in his fantasy, the greater the degree to which achievement motivation is a part of his personality.

This projective test was administered to each individual class in the following standardized way. On a regular school day each fifth and sixth grade class was shown a set of four ambiguous pictures on a screen from 2" x 2" slides. A description of the pictures and the order of their presentation is as follows: (1) boy, smiling at desk at home; (2) foreman and worker standing near machine in shop; (3) man working on papers at office desk; and (4) man and youth chatting out doors.[1]

After the administrator had gone into the classroom and set up the slide projector and screen, he wrote on the blackboard the following four types of questions:

1. What is happening? Who are the persons?
2. What has led up to this situation? That is, what has happened in the past?
3. What is being thought? What is wanted? By whom?
4. What will happen? What will be done?

He then passed out to the pupils five sheets of unlined paper. On the first sheet, in the upper left-hand corner, the students were asked to write their name, age, birthday, and the name of their teacher.

The following instructions were read:

> This will be a test to see how good you are at writing stories. I will show a picture on the screen before you. You will have 20 seconds to look at the picture and then 6 minutes to make up a story about it. You have been given one sheet of paper for each picture. Notice the four questions on the board. They can be used for each picture. They will guide your thinking and help you write your story. Plan to spend about a minute on each question. Remember, you will have a total of 6 minutes to complete your story. So write for the full 6 minutes given for each picture. I will keep time and will tell you when it is about time to go on to the next question.
>
> There are no right or wrong answers, so feel free to make up any kind of story about the pictures that you choose. Try to make your stories interesting and dramatic. Do not merely describe the picture you see. Write a story about it.
>
> Work as fast as you can in order to finish in time. If you need more space to write your story, use the back side of the sheet. Are there any questions?

Each of the four slides was presented for 20 seconds and the students given 6 minutes per slide in which to write a story. The stories were scored according to the procedure outlined by McClelland et al. (1953).

A scorer must first decide how a story is to be graded with respect to one of three basic scoring categories: Achievement Imagery, Doubtful Achievement Imagery, or Unrelated Imagery. By Achievement Imagery is meant that (1) one of the characters in the story expresses concern over doing as well as or better than others; (2) one of the characters is involved in a unique accomplishment that will result in personal success; or (3) one of the characters is involved in reaching a long-term achievement goal. If a story contains achievement imagery, only then may it be scored with respect to ten subcategories. If a story contains no achievement imagery, it is scored as having either Doubtful Achievement Imagery or Unrelated Imagery. By Doubtful Achievement Imagery is meant that the story fails to meet one of the Achievement Imagery criteria. Most frequently the stories to be classified as doubtful are ones in which a character is involved in a commonplace task or solving a routine problem. Unrelated Imagery is scored if the story contains no reference to an achievement goal.

The category of Achievement Imagery is given a score of plus one, Doubtful Achievement Imagery is scored zero, and Unrelated Imagery is scored minus one. Each subcategory scored counts plus one. Each subcategory is scored only once per story and the maximum possible score for a single story is plus eleven.

When the administrator had scored all fifty stories, ten of these stories were randomly drawn, five from the achievers and five from the nonachievers, and graded by another scorer. The relationship between these two sets of scores was determined by the Rank-Order Coefficient. The coefficient obtained was .89, indicating high interscorer agreement.

RESULTS

For the sample of achievers, the *n* achievement scores ranged from -2 to 16. The mean of these twenty-five scores was 5.32 and the standard deviation was 5.92. The *n* achievement scores obtained from stories of the nonachieving boys ranged from -4 to 18. The mean of the nonachieving scores was 3.72 and the standard deviation was 5.57. The significance of the difference between the means of the achieving and nonachieving samples was analyzed by means of the *t* test. The value of *t* calculated from these data was .99, and this value was not significant at the .05 level of probability. These data did not justify the conclusion that achieving elementary school boys have a greater need to achieve than their nonachieving counterparts.

After obtaining these essentially negative results, the data were re-examined. This time the *t* test was used to test the significance of

the difference between the means of a group of 9 extreme underachievers and 9 matched achievers. In this case underachievers were students whose grade-point average fell at least two quartiles below that of their intelligence quartile. In Table II the 9 extreme underachievers were those students falling under the heavy line. The *n* achievement scores obtained from the stories of extreme underachieving boys ranged from -4 to 8. The mean of these underachievers was 2.44 and the standard deviation was 3.24. For this sample of achievers, the *n* achievement scores ranged from -2 to 14. The mean of these scores was 3.44 and the standard deviation was 5.44. The application of the *t* test to these data resulted in a *t* value of .47. This value was not significant at the .05 level of probability. On the basis of this test it was not even justifiable to conclude that achieving boys had a greater need to achieve than extreme underachievers.

Table II

An Approximation of Intelligence-Test Scores and Grade-Point Averages into Quartiles for the Purpose of Defining Extreme Underachievers

Grade-Point Average	IQ 123-100	IQ 99-93	IQ 92-85	IQ 84-	
4.00-2.50	10	3	6	2	21
2.49-2.00	6	7	6	2	21
1.99-1.30	5	7	5	4	21
1.29-	1	3	3	13	20
	22	19	20	22	83

A Product Moment Correlation was calculated between *n* achievement scores and intelligence scores to determine the relationship between these two dimensions. The value of *r* obtained was .49. This value was significant at the .05 level of probability, indicating significant relationship between *n* achievement and intelligence.

Discussion

This study predicted that achieving Mexican-American elementary school boys would have a greater need to achieve than nonachieving elementary school boys. Although the direction of the results was as expected, this difference was not statistically significant.

One reason for this failure to obtain the anticipated results may have involved a question of the validity of McClelland's projective

technique when used to distinguish between achievers and nonachievers of this age group. McClelland et al. (1953) stated that the measure will reflect with a fair degree of accuracy differences in achievement motivation in subjects whose age, sex, or cultural orientation differs from that of the original upper-middle-class college male criterion populations. They reported a number of studies to support this statement of validity.

Nevertheless, it is possible that this test, standardized on college students, will not reflect with a fair degree of accuracy assumed motivational differences in fifth and sixth grade boys from a lower socioeconomic background. There is a difference between a sophisticated population of college men and that of ten and eleven year old Mexican-American boys. The validity of this projective technique must eventually break down at some lower age level, and the question posed by the present study is whether this age level might not be that of around eleven years. More research is needed on this measure utilizing elementary age populations. Although the scoring criteria are rather detailed in their presentation by McClelland, the examples provided are obviously drawn from an older, more educated group than the subjects in this study. No small amount of ambiguity surrounded the scoring of a fair number of responses in this study.

A second possible explanation for the results obtained in this study is that these two groups, achievers and nonachievers, in reality did not differ with respect to achievement motivation. The ambiguity surrounding this point has been suggested by relevant research as noted. Although the majority of the studies conclude that achieving students do experience a greater need to achieve than do nonachieving students, there are many which report findings to the contrary.

If academic success is not related to an internalized need or motivation to achieve, the question is raised as to what variables are operating in the cases of academic achievement in this study. Travers (1972) pointed out that the relationship between achievement need and task performance exists only where the task represents a challenge. If the task does not present a challenge to the subject, then no relationship is found. The absence of correlations between achievement motivation and academic achievement in some research may indicate that the grades were in school work which provided little in the way of challenge. Possibly the nonachievers were not lacking in motivation but, rather, challenge. It may be that the projective test taped this unchallenged motivation. It may also be that for the achievers the projective story was not a challenge.

On the other hand, the achieving group may be excelling in grades for reasons other than motivation. Ramirez, Taylor, & Peter-

sen (1971) found that Mexican-American populations generally identify with a system of values which differs from the Anglo-American culture, one of which involves a more negative attitude toward education. With acculturation, however, it might be expected that a portion of Mexican-Americans would come to identify with academic achievement as valued by the majority culture.

Another explanation may reside in the authoritarian history and family structure of the Mexican-American. The achievers success in schools may be more a matter of acquiescence to an authority figure, the teacher, than motivation.

As mentioned earlier, one suggestion that has been offered to account for this confusion and disagreement in the literature is that the populations studied have been too heterogeneous. While it is true that in the study of achievement and nonachievement many of the confounding variables might be more easily controlled and observed in homogeneous minority groups, the very homogeneity of the present population may be a factor contributing to the results of this investigation. The more homogeneity that characterizes a population, less will be the difference expected between any two samples drawn from it.

There are data to support the hypothesis that achievement motives develop in cultures and families where there is an emphasis on the independent development of the individual (Ramirez et al., 1971). Low achievement motivation is associated with cultures and families in which the child is more dependent on his parents and subordinate in importance to them.

The Spanish-speaking culture is homogeneous and consistent at this point (Saunders, 1954). The Mexican-Americans are descendents of a village way of life in which individual achievement was discouraged rather than admired. This history is characterized by conformity and obedience to custom. They are members of a tradition in which aggression, competition, individual responsibility and initiative were not highly developed and in which acceptance, resignation, cooperation, and the subordination of the individual to the community was stressed. In the Spanish-speaking culture independence is not a highly cherished value. A dependent state is not considered extraordinary and interdependence is encouraged. Several studies have found Mexican-American children to be less competitive than Anglo-American children (Kagan & Madsen, 1971; McClintock, 1974). It may be that this cultural heritage is operating against the evolution of higher demonstrated achievement motivation in one group as over against other groups in the general Mexican-American population.

Finally, the significant correlation obtained in this study between *n* achievement and intelligence provides a rather conclusive explanation for the failure to find a significant difference between the achieving and nonachieving boys. The two groups were matched with respect to the variable of intelligence, and if intelligence is related to *n* achievement, no significant difference between the two samples would be expected.

This significant correlation could well be the focus of further study. While it has been suggested that *n* achievement may be related to performance on intelligence tests, to date little evidence has been accumulated to suggest that intelligence and achievement are necessarily correlated (Crandall, 1963).

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FOOTNOTES

[1]These slides may be obtained from the American Documentation Institute. Address: Chief, Photoduplication Service, Library of Congress, Auxiliary Publications Project, Washington 25, D.C.